

Message Text

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SUBJECT: OMB FOLLOW-UP: CONSULTATIONS WITH AMERICAN
BUSINESSMEN ABROAD

REF: STATE A-10168, DECEMBER 12, 1973

1. OFFICERS OF ALL RANKS IN THE EMBASSY, PARTICULARLY IN THE ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL SECTION MAINTAIN VERY CLOSE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL TIES WITH THE AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN. EXCHANGES OF VIEWS AT ALL LEVELS ARE FREQUENT, AND WE BELIEVE, MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL. THESE EXCHANGES RANGE FROM INFORMAL, DAY TO DAY CONTACTS ON MATTERS OF SPECIFIC INTEREST, SUCH AS MIDDLE EAST OIL OR THE OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS OF US AIRLINES, THROUGH CONTACTS IN A VARIETY OF PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, TO CAREFULLY STRUCTURED MEETINGS BETWEEN EMBASSY OFFICERS AND AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN ON SPECIFIC SUBJECTS. THERE IS AN EXTREMELY VARIED GROUP OF INSTITUTIONS IN LONDON WHICH FACILITATES AND IN SOME CASES ENCOURAGES THESE CONTACTS RANGING FROM THE AMERICAN CLUB OF LONDON, THE HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL CLUB OF LONDON, THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN BANKS IN LONDON, THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN THE U.K. (AMCHAM), THE MONDAY LUNCH CLUB COMPOSED OF LEADING US

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BUSINESSMEN AND EMBASSY OFFICERS, AND A BROAD SPECTRUM

OF BRITISH DISCUSSION CLUBS DEVOTED TO CERTAIN ASPECTS OF POLITICO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. THE LATTER INCLUDE ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE EUROPEAN-ATLANTIC GROUP, MID-ATLANTIC CLUB, THE FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION, THE TRADE POLICY RESEARCH CENTER, THE ECONOMIC RESEARCH COUNCIL, AND THE OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE. ALL OF THESE GROUPS SPONSOR MEETINGS OF VARIOUS SORTS AT WHICH THE MAJOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC ISSUES OF THE DAY ARE DISCUSSED. EMBASSY OFFICERS AT

ALL LEVELS PARTICIPATE REGULARLY IN THESE EITHER ON OFFICIAL OR PROFESSIONAL BASIS AND CONSIDER SUCH ATTENDANCE AN IMPORTANT PART THEIR NORMAL DUTIES OR PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES. FEEDBACK OBTAINED PLAYS PART IN OUR CONTINUOUS ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL REPORTING AND ANALYSIS.

2. IN ADDITION TO THESE MORE GENERAL MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS, EMB (OFTEN IN COOPERATION WITH ONE OR ANOTHER LOCAL ORGANIZATION) WORKS CLOSELY WITH SELECTED SEGMENTS US INDUSTRY ON SPECIFIC PROBLEMS SUCH AS HMG POLICIES REGARDING NORTH SEA OIL, NUCLEAR REACTOR SALES, PROBLEMS OF AEROSPACE, AGRICULTURAL MATTERS ON FOOD AND FEED, ETC.

3. TURNING TO SPECIFIC QUESTION RAISED REPAIR, THE TOKYO SEMINAR CONCEPT DOES NOT SEEM PARTICULARLY PERTINENT TO THE LONDON SCENE. IN MANY POSTS US BUSINESS COMMUNITY OPERATES IN SOMEWHAT UNFAMILIAR ENVIRONMENT IN REGARD TO LANGUAGE, PSYCHOLOGY, GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS PRACTICE. THUS, A FORMAL MECHANISM MOST USEFUL FOR EMBASSY AND CONSULATES TO OFFER INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE BOTH IN REGARD TO THEIR DAY TO DAY OPERATIONS AND IN MORE GENERAL TERMS TO PROTECTING THEIR LONG TERM INTERESTS IN THEIR COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE. IN THE UK, HOWEVER, THE ENVIRONMENT IS MUCH MORE FAMILIAR TO US BUSINESSMEN AND BANKERS, WITH NO LANGUAGE BARRIER, SIMILAR APPROACHES AND PHILOSOPHY ON THE PART OF THE UK GOVERNMENT TO BUSINESS FIRMS, AND IN FACT VERY FEW FORMAL DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN US AND BRITISH BUSINESSMEN.

4. MOST LARGE AMERICAN FIRMS ALSO FIND THAT THEIR LONG RANGE INTERESTS IN BRITAIN ARE VERY SIMILAR TO THOSE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF LARGE BRITISH FIRMS AND HENCE HAVE FOUND IT TO THEIR ADVANTAGE TO BECOME MEMBERS OF THE CONFEDERATION OF BRITISH INDUSTRY (CBI). THE CBI AS THE MAJOR ENTITY THROUGH WHICH THE BRITISH BUSINESS COMMUNITY DEALS WITH THE GOVERNMENT, IS GENERALLY FELT TO BE A MOST SATISFACTORY ADVOCATE FOR ALL OF ITS MEMBERS IN BOTH QUESTIONS OF OVERALL POLICY AND IN SPECIFIC PROBLEM AREAS.

5. THE UK IS EXTREMELY WELL ENDOWED WITH CONFERENCES

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AND SEMINARS RUN ON A PROFESSIONAL BASIS DESIGNED TO FACILITATE FOREIGN BUSINESS CONTACTS WITH EVERY CONCEIVABLE SECTOR OF THE BRITISH ECONOMY AND ADMINISTRATION. IN ADDITION TO THESE, THE EMBASSY ITSELF SPONSORS A NUMBER OF SEMINARS ON MANAGEMENT, TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC TOPICS INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THOSE AIMED AT SUBJECTS RELATED TO OUR VARIOUS TRADE CENTER SHOWS. IN ADDITION THE EMBASSY IS ACTIVE IN PROMOTING PUBLIC APPEARANCES OF BOTH OFFICIAL AND BUSINESS VISITORS IN APPROPRIATE BRITISH FORA. LEAVING ASIDE THE OBVIOUS QUIRKS THAT DIFFERENTIATE BUSINESS AND LEGAL PRACTICES BETWEEN THE UK AND OURSELVES, AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN GENERALLY DO NOT FIND THE UK BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT A PARTICULAR PROBLEM IN OPERATING HERE.

6. IN SUM, WE BELIEVE THAT THE EMBASSY'S PRESENT ACTIVITIES IN BRITAIN KEEP US IN CLOSE AND CONSTANT TOUCH WITH THE LEADERS OF THE RESIDENT AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND AFFORD AMPLE OCCASIONS FOR DISCUSSIONS SUCH AS THOSE ENVISIONED IN THE REFERENCE. OUR ACTIVITIES ARE LARGELY DESIGNED TO SUPPLEMENT AND BOLSTER EXISTING CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATIONS, AS OVER

SOLICITOUSNESS ON OUR PART WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE RE-
SENTED BY THE EXPERIENCED AND ABLE RESIDENT BUSINESS
COMMUNITY HERE, AND COULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE.
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